The grammatical and Discourse Features of Spontaneous Speech Extract

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Abstract:

This article aims to investigate the characteristics of spontaneous speech and highlight the distinctions between spoken and written language. While certain traits of spontaneous speech may occasionally appear in written texts, such as newspaper articles or personal letters, they are predominantly oral phenomena. The analysis emphasizes the pedagogical implications of these differences, advocating for their inclusion in English language curricula. Thus, drawing on a spontaneous speech extract, the study illustrates features commonly associated with oral communication, as documented by previous scholars. It argues that students should not only be taught grammar, writing, and formal speaking, but also the realities of everyday conversational language. Recognizing that learners have diverse motivations, ranging from basic communication to native-like proficiency, the study stresses that teaching written grammar alone is insufficient. the study concludes that teachers should work for a shift in focus from the exclusive teaching of written norms to a more balanced awareness of spoken language, bridging the gap between classroom learning and real-life communication.

Keywords: Spontaneous Speech, Spoken Grammar, Discourse Features, Corpus Linguistics, Pedagogical Implications.

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الخصائص النحوية والخطابية لمقتطف من الكلام العفوي

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ملخص البحث:

يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة خصائص الكلام العفوي وإبراز الفروق الجوهرية بين اللغة المنطوقة واللغة المكتوبة. فبينما قد تظهر بعض سمات الكلام العفوي أحيانًا في النصوص المكتوبة، مثل المقالات الصحفية أو الرسائل الشخصية، إلا أنها تظل في جوهرها ظواهر شفهية. ويؤكد التحليل على الأبعاد التربوية لهذه الفروق، داعيًا إلى دمجها ضمن مناهج تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية. وانطلاقًا من تحليل مقطع من خطاب عفوي، يوضح البحث الخصائص المميزة للتواصل الشفهي كما وثّقها عدد من الباحثين السابقين. ويرى أن تعليم اللغة يجب ألا يقتصر على القواعد والكتابة والتحدث الرسمي، بل ينبغي أن يشمل أيضًا واقع اللغة المحكية في الحياة اليومية. كما يقرّ بأن المتعلمين تختلف دوافعهم بين من يسعى إلى التواصل الأساسي ومن يطمح إلى إتقان يشبه المتحدثين الأصليين، ومن ثم يؤكد البحث أن التركيز على القواعد الكتابية وحدها غير كافٍ. ويخلص إلى أن على المعلّمين توجيه جهودهم نحو تحقيق توازن بين تعليم اللغة المكتوبة وتنمية الوعي باللغة المنطوقة، بما يسهم في ردم الفجوة بين تعلم اللغة في الصف الدراسي وممارستها في التواصل الواقعي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الكلام العفوي، القواعد المنطوقة، السمات الخطابية، اللسانيات المعجمية (كوربوس)، الدلالات التربوية .

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1. Introduction

This paper will discuss and analyse a crucial topic of interest to many researchers and learners of the English language, namely, the grammatical and discourse differences between spoken and written language. As a teacher of ESL, many of my students' writings reflect their spoken language; therefore, a mixture of these two styles occurs while they are learning English as a second language. Thus, influenced by personal experience, we have chosen this topic, and we will try to answer these questions in order to clarify this case:

a) What are the grammatical and discourse features of the spontaneous speech extract (see appendix)?

b) What are the general grammatical differences between spoken language and written language?

Spoken language has traditionally been regarded as a subordinate part of standard written grammar and considered secondary in the teaching process. Historically, this perspective emerged due to the limited availability of authentic spoken language data. However, with the advent of corpus linguistics, scholars began to challenge this assumption. As Biber et al. (1999) and Carter and McCarthy (2006) observed, the development of large spoken corpora enabled linguists to systematically analyze the grammatical and discourse differences between spoken and written English, offering a new empirical foundation for research. Consequently, the technological advances in speech recording and transcription have provided new insights into spontaneous conversation and reshaped our understanding of language structure. The spontaneous extract analyzed in this study—taken from the Nottingham Corpus (McCarthy & Carter, 1995)—illustrates this relationship. The following corpora are among the most useful resources for researchers and learners of English spoken language.

While this study does not involve human participants directly, it is grounded in empirical data derived from authentic spoken corpora. The use of naturally occurring conversational extracts provides an evidence-based foundation for analyzing the grammatical and discourse features of spontaneous speech. Future research, however, could extend this work by involving participants in real-time conversation tasks to further validate and compare the corpus findings with naturally elicited speech performance.

This study also contributes to the growing body of research on spoken grammar by providing a corpus-based analysis of naturally occurring speech. Its main objective is to describe how grammatical and discourse features manifest in spontaneous interaction and to discuss their pedagogical

implications for English language teaching. By drawing on authentic conversational extracts, it aims to bridge the gap between theoretical understanding and classroom practice, emphasizing that spoken grammar represents a systematic, communicative mode rather than a simplified version of written grammar.

2. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The study of spoken language has undergone significant evolution over the past four decades. Halliday (1989) first established the distinction between the *spoken mode* and the *written mode*, emphasizing that the two operate under different communicative conditions. Spoken language, he argued, functions primarily in real-time, interactive contexts, where meaning is jointly constructed between participants, while written language typically serves to organize information in a more permanent, structured form (Halliday, 1989).

Carter and McCarthy (1995) advanced this framework through the notion of *spoken grammar*, challenging the traditional written-based models of English grammar. They argued that spoken English follows its own systematic patterns—characterized by ellipsis, repetition, discourse markers, hesitation fillers, and false starts—that serve communicative rather than structural purposes. These features are not errors or deficiencies but strategic adaptations to the immediacy and spontaneity of conversation (Carter & McCarthy, 1995; McCarthy, 1998).

Recent studies have reaffirmed and expanded upon this theoretical foundation using corpus-based methodologies. Jones (2024) demonstrated that spoken grammar is contextually shaped by the situational and cognitive pressures of real-time interaction, showing that learners develop distinct awareness when exposed to authentic spoken data. Similarly, Rodríguez-Fuentes (2022) highlighted that grammar instruction must address register differences, integrating both spoken and written patterns to achieve authentic communicative competence.

Chafe (1982) originally conceptualized speech as *involvement-based* rather than *integration-based*, suggesting that spoken interaction prioritizes interpersonal engagement over structural precision. This perspective continues to influence modern discourse studies, especially in relation to pragmatic and sociolinguistic competence (Taguchi, 2022). The present study therefore adopts a functionalist approach to spoken grammar—viewing it as a rule-governed, context-sensitive system that fulfills communicative needs in real time, rather than as an informal deviation from written grammar.

2.2 Literature Review

Corpus linguistics has provided a robust empirical foundation for analyzing spontaneous spoken English. Biber et al. (1999) conducted one of the most comprehensive comparisons between spoken and written registers, identifying the higher frequency of pronouns, contractions, discourse markers, and coordination in conversational English. These findings illustrate how speech operates under the constraints of time and interaction, emphasizing accessibility and shared understanding over syntactic complexity (Biber et al., 1999).

Leech (2000) proposed the add-on principle, whereby speakers construct utterances incrementally to maintain fluency. This principle reflects the cognitive load of speaking spontaneously and accounts for the fragmented yet coherent nature of conversational turns. Similarly, Miller and Weinert (1998) analyzed real-time planning and observed that features such as pauses, fillers, and reformulations are central to spoken discourse and not signs of disfluency.

McCarthy (1998) further elaborated on conversational grammar as an interactive system influenced by social roles, relationships, and discourse goals. He emphasized elements such as response tokens (yeah, right, okay), tag questions, and vague language as crucial for maintaining conversational flow and mutual understanding. Later, Carter and McCarthy (2006) linked these features to language pedagogy, advocating the inclusion of authentic spoken data in ESL and EFL classrooms to improve pragmatic competence.

Recent scholarship supports and extends these principles through empirical data. Dang (2020) examined frequency patterns in academic spoken English and found clear lexical and syntactic distinctions from academic writing, reinforcing the idea that spoken discourse forms a unique linguistic register. Lusta (2023) reviewed recent developments in corpus-based language teaching and concluded that data-driven learning (DDL) approaches enable learners to internalize spoken grammar through authentic examples rather than prescriptive rules.

More recent corpus-based studies continue to reinforce the importance of spoken grammar in contemporary pedagogy. Jones (2024) demonstrated that exposure to authentic spoken data enhances learners' awareness of real-time syntactic flexibility and pragmatic responsiveness in English conversation. Similarly, Kim (2023) explored lexical and phraseological differences between spoken and written opinion responses, confirming that speech prioritizes immediacy and interactivity over structural complexity. Biber (2024) provided further quantitative evidence through multidimensional analysis, showing that the text complexity of spoken English differs systematically from that of written texts due to interactional constraints and topic fluidity. Together, these studies reaffirm that spontaneous spoken English represents a fully systematic, context-driven linguistic mode that

complements rather than competes with written grammar in communicative competence development (Jones, 2024; Kim, 2023; Biber, 2024).

Together, these contemporary studies validate earlier theoretical models while demonstrating their ongoing relevance in applied linguistics and second language pedagogy. They collectively affirm that spontaneous spoken language is not a simplified or defective form of writing but a dynamic, structured, and context-driven mode of human communication.

3. Methodology

This study adopts a **corpus-based descriptive analytical approach**, focusing on the examination of authentic spoken English data. The purpose of this method is to identify the grammatical and discourse features of spontaneous speech by drawing examples from established spoken corpora. Corpora represent valuable linguistic resources for understanding how speakers naturally construct meaning in real time and how grammar operates under the constraints of immediacy and interaction (Biber et al., 1999; Carter & McCarthy, 2006).

The analysis in this study relies primarily on the **Nottingham Corpus of Spoken English**, which is part of the *Cambridge and Nottingham Corpus of Discourse in English (CANCODE)*, as well as comparative reference to other major spoken corpora. These corpora were selected because they contain transcribed, naturally occurring conversations across diverse social and situational contexts, providing an empirical foundation for studying spontaneous language use.

Table 1 presents a summary of the major spoken corpora that informed the present analysis, outlining their approximate size, features, and limitations.

Table 1. Major Spoken Corpora Used in English Language Research

Corpus Name	Abbreviation	Approx. Size	Main Advantages	Limitations
International Corpus of English – Great Britain	ICE-GB	600,000 words	Fully parsed; advanced search software; includes linked audio recordings	Limited national scope; moderate size
Cambridge and Nottingham Corpus of	CANCODE	≈ 5 million words	Large, detailed genre and demographic subsectioning; rich sociolinguistic tagging	Simple orthographic transcription; no

Discourse in English				public access to sound files
Bank of English (spoken section)	BOE	≈ 20 million words	Extremely large; wide coverage of informal conversation	Simple orthographic transcription; limited access to recordings
Longman Corpus of Spoken American English	LCSAE	≈ 5 million words (1997)	Includes demographic subsectioning; American English variety	Orthographic transcription only; lacks prosodic data

In this study, data from **CANCODE** were primarily utilized to identify the grammatical and discourse features typical of spontaneous conversation. This corpus provides a wide range of authentic, naturally occurring spoken interactions across public, professional, and private settings, making it particularly suited for investigating conversational structures such as ellipsis, repetition, discourse markers, and hesitation phenomena (Carter & McCarthy, 1995).

The spoken extract analyzed in the *Appendix* was drawn directly from this corpus and transcribed following the conventions established by McCarthy and Carter (1995). Each feature identified in the analysis was cross-referenced with similar findings from other corpora and studies (e.g., ICE-GB, BOE, and LCSAE) to ensure analytical validity and generalizability.

The methodological framework therefore combines **qualitative discourse analysis** and **quantitative corpus-based observation**, allowing the study to highlight not only the frequency of grammatical phenomena but also their pragmatic and interactional functions within real-life communication (Jones, 2024; Rodríguez-Fuentes, 2022).

Scope and Limitations. This study adopts a corpus-based design without direct involvement of human participants. The analysis draws on transcribed, naturally occurring conversations (e.g., CANCODE), which enables systematic observation of spontaneous features (ellipsis, fillers, response tokens) but limits access to prosodic/phonetic detail where public audio is unavailable. Consequently, findings generalize to the grammatical and discourse level of spontaneous speech rather than to fine-grained acoustic phenomena. Future research could triangulate corpus evidence with task-based recordings to validate the patterns observed.

4. The grammatical and discourse features of spontaneous speech

In this section, we are going to analyse the grammatical and discourse features of spontaneous speech, and we shall refer to these features in an extract taken from the Nottingham corpus (McCarthy & Carter, 1995). Studying and analysing these features enables both teachers and learners of English to form a base of knowledge about the grammatical and discourse features of spontaneous speech.

Biber et al. (1999) suggest a wide range of grammatical features that occur in conversations; those features are divided into subcategories that explain the grammatical and discourse features of spontaneous speech. We will consider some of the characteristics that occurred in our data.

4.1 Conversation Grammar Reflects a Shared Context

Conversation takes place between two or more participants, where the speakers of a conversation or a speech may share social, physical, and psychological aspects. Such sharing may influence the grammatical and informational structures of speech; therefore, some of these structures may be reduced or deleted from the context. The following are some of those features:

4.1.1 Personal pronouns:

Pronouns occur in conversation more frequently than the usage of nouns does; they may be used to reduce formality between speakers, and what are they referring to is already known from the context. Such a feature is used almost everywhere in our extract, for example:

3- <S01> The Old Timer burger but ***I'm*** gonna have cheese with ***it***

26- <S03> How would ***you*** like ***it*** cooked?

4.1.2 Ellipsis:

One of the most noticeable features of our spoken data is ellipsis. It refers to the omission of certain grammatical features that could be known to the hearer, or due to the effect of time that forces the speaker to omit certain elements. Three types of ellipsis were found in this spontaneous speech extract.

Firstly, situational ellipsis: according to McCarthy and Carter (1995), this kind of ellipsis occurs in situations in which speakers are involved in an action or, as they call it, Language in Action Genre. The following are the examples in which situational ellipsis appears.

1- <S 01> ***I'm gonna have*** er.... An Old Timer with cheese, I am

3- <S01> The Old Timer burger but ***I'm gonna have*** cheese with it

These two examples show a clear situational ellipsis where the preposition (to) is omitted from the utterance (I'm going [to] have), and it has been left to the hearer to deduce the omission from the context.

Secondly, question ellipsis is another type of ellipsis found in the extract above. This kind of ellipsis, as we will see, omits grammatical features that occur earlier in the conversation. The following are examples of elliptic questions.

23- <S03> ***What cheese***?

12- <S01> I'm gonna have the deep fried mushrooms, ***you like mushrooms***, don't you?

Instead of saying -What kind of cheese? – the speaker omits these, let's say, extra features, because they are already mentioned in the speech. In addition, it is clear that the speaker dropped *Do you* from the second utterance when he said, *you like mushrooms, don't you.*

Finally, elliptic reply is the third type of ellipsis occurring in the extract. It is also a way to reduce the unneeded elements that appeared earlier in the dialogue.

36- <S02> Erm ***medium***

42- <S03> ***White wine***

4.2 Conversational Grammar is Interactive Grammar

Interaction is a conversational process that enables speakers to address and respond to each other according to their relationship and social status. For instance, friends tend to speak informally rather than formally to each other, whereas another social relationship must use a more formal method of address. Some of the features that speakers tend to use in a conversation are:

4.2.1 Response forms:

* These forms may stand alone in a conversational context, for example: (oh, right, okay, yeah).

4- <S02> ***oh right***, I'm gonna have, I think I'm gonna have a veggy one with Barbecue

7- <S02> ***Yeah*** I'm trying not to have nachos (5 secs)

32-<S03> ***Yeah*** they're ***okay***, they're not made on the premises though

* Greetings**: (**hi, bye)

The only example that was mentioned in the conversation extract is:

16- <S03> **Hi**

4.2.2 Tails:

McCarthy (1998) refers to tails as grammatical patterns that are inserted at the end of clauses by speakers in order to emphasize what they have just said. Tag questions were the only tails found in our data.

17- <S 01> I'm gonna have er.... An Old Timer with cheese, ***I am***

12- <S01> I'm gonna have the deep fried mushrooms, you like mushrooms, ***don't you***?

17- <S02> Don't do cider ***do you***?

4.3 Conversational Grammar Highlights Affective Content: Personal Feelings and Attitudes:

Participants, attitude, and feeling may affect the spontaneous speech interaction; as a result we might encounter some of the following features:

4.3.1 Polite Formulae: (could you.... Would you.... Can I..... Sorry, thanks, please) such forms may be said in formal conversation and were found in our data above.

29- <S02> ***Can I have*** the, er nachos and, erm, I was wondering whether to have a

30- veggy burger or the normal burger erm, are the veggy burgers nice?

35- <S03> *How* ***would you like*** it cooked?

46- <S01> ***Thanks***

4.3.2 Evaluation and Attitude : (good, lovely, nice)

These adjectives are used in conversations to express speakers' feelings about what has been said. The following is the only example found in the extract:

29- <S02> Can I have the, er nachos and, erm, I was wondering whether to have a 30- veggy burger or the normal burger erm, are the veggy burgers ***nice***?

4.4 Conversational Grammar is Adapted to the Needs of Real-Time Processing:

"Spontaneous speech is produced in real time, impromptu, and with no opportunity for editing..." Miller and Weinert (1998, p. 22). This indicates that conversation participants involved in a challenging situation are required to produce and receive information using their short-term memory. For such demands, speakers may acquire some features, which we are going to look at below.

4.4.1 Normal dysfluencies:

This process is represented by several conversational features such as hesitation pauses, hesitation fillers, and repeats. Examples from the extract may clarify these features.

4.4.2 Hesitation pauses:

11- **(11 secs)**

14- **(3 secs)**

4.4.3 Repeats:

4-<S02> Oh right, ***I'm gonna have***, I think ***I'm gonna hav***e a veggy one with barbecue

33-<S02> All right, ***I'll have,*** er ***I'll have*** a normal burger then, with barbecue

4.4.4 Hesitation fillers:

1- <S 01> I'm gonna have ***er***.... an Old Timer with cheese, I am

6- <S01> ***Mm***, are you gonna have a starter? What you gonna have?

36- <S02> ***Erm*** medium

4.4.5 Reductive mechanisms:

This kind of process is also influenced by the real time limitation that forces speakers to reduce and omit some of the utterances that have been produced. Such reductions are clarified by the following examples:

1- <S 01> ***I'm gonna*** have er.... an Old Timer with cheese, I am .

21- <S01> ***I'll*** have the deep fried mushrooms with erm, an Old Timer burger. Can I?

32- <S03> Yeah ***they're*** okay! They're not made on the premises though.

4.4.6 C-unit

The third type of influential elements that play an essential role in real-time processing, and may reduce the stress on the speaker's short memory are illustrated by Biber et al. (1999):

Conversation speakers tend to use a grammatical function called a C-unit, which helps participants to produce utterances with fewer words. According to Biber et al. (1999), the average length of a spoken utterance is 5-6 words. A C-unit is either a clause or a non-clause that stands alone in an utterance. Examples from our data may explain this process:

36- <S02> ***Erm medium***

37- <S 03> ***And drinks***?

42- <S 03> ***White wine***

46- <S 01> ***Thanks***

4.4.7 Add-on principle

The other influential element of spontaneous speech is the add-on principle suggested by Leech (2000). This principle helps speakers to avoid the complexity of an utterance by dividing them into

chains of pieces, thereby resolving the complexity of the utterance. Here are some examples of this principle:

29- <S02> ***Can I have the | er nachos and erm | I was wondering whether to have a veggy burger | or the normal burger | erm, are the veggy burgers nice |*** ?

15- <S02> ***I am gonna have to have nachos | I'm addicted to it | I want | they don't do cider | and I don't want a beer |***

4.5 Spontaneous Spoken language VS. Standard Written Language

"The grammar of spontaneous spoken language is different in crucial aspects from that of carefully composed written text, and operatse under the same constraints related to participants, goals and setting as lexical selection." McCarthy (1998, p.127).

In this section, we will briefly mention some of the general grammatical differences between spoken language and written language that we looked at in the previous part, which have been identified by many researchers such as Leech (2000), Biber et al. (1999), Miller and Weinert (1998), and McCarthy (1998). The examples will be taken from the previous section.

Table 2. Comparison Between Spoken and Written English Language Features

Spoken language	Written language
Speech takes place in real time in which speakers act according to the limitation of time; therefore, many special characteristics occur such as hesitation, fillers, words repetition, and reformulation. (I'm gonna have... I'm gonna have, erm well done)	Written language takes place when there is a plenty of time to correct and make sure that the text is clear and well formed.
Speech is between two or more participants, so there is a high frequency of: Tag questions:(do you, don't you) Questions: these are used frequently in speech:(what cheese?, what's that?)	Written language is done by a writer who is away from the readers. In standard written language, there is less usage of these elements than in speech. The text is well organised.

Response forms: these are usually used in spoken language to indicate interaction with the speaker.(yeah, oh alright, okay).	
A C-unit is an special character of spoken language, in which speakers tend to use a small amount of words that stand alone in an utterance as we saw from the previous section; for example, Erm medium, Thanks, and white wine.	In written language, there are complete sentences that are connected to each other; therefore, we will not find a C-unit in written language.
Spoken language is produced by chains of sections as we illustrated above.	Written language is produced in full sentences.
The reduction of some utterances such as (I'm gonna, and I'll have...)	There is no reduction in standard written language, so all the words are written in full form.
The syntax of spoken language is far less complex.	The syntax of standard written language is complex.
Vocabulary is another differential element, in spoken language: there is a tendency to use simple, informal words and expressions, such as (nice, big, old time burger, and gonna)	Standard written language tends to use formal, sophisticated vocabulary and expression.

As shown in Table 2, spoken and written English differ significantly in grammar, syntax, and vocabulary complexity, reflecting their distinct communicative purposes and processing constraints (McCarthy, 1998).

McCarthy (1998) identifies the key points that differentiate spontaneous speech as opposed to written text (McCarthy 1998, p.109):

1- Speakers operate under the constraints of "real time" planning; careful composition and selection of words is the exception rather than the rule.

2- More than one speaker normally contributes to the vocabulary that occurs.

3- Roles vary in conversation; speakers may not be participating as equals, and one or more speakers may dominate vocabulary selection.

4- Roles may shift as the conversation progresses; this may be reflected in vocabulary choice.

5- Topic- what is being talked about – is not pre-determined nor are there boundaries between topics. Vocabulary choice reflects such shifts and contributes to connectivity and shading between topics (i.e. moving from one topic to another without a sudden jump, making connections between topics.).

6- Speakers have no automatic rights to have their topics addressed, but have to negotiate them.

7- Spoken language is usually more implicit and situation dependent. The lexical density of spoken texts may differ considerably from that of written texts on the same topics.

8- Conversation contains a large amount of vocabulary whose function is mainly relational or interaction (i.e. in the services of establishing and reinforcing social relations), rather than transactional (i.e. functioning principally in the transmitting of information, goods or services).

9- Conversation contains a significant number of prefabricated lexical expressions that facilitate fluency and are often idiomatic in structure and meaning.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, we have analysed the spontaneous speech extract, and explained the characteristics of spontaneous speech, which have been illustrated by many scholars and researchers. In addition, we have pointed out briefly the general differences between spoken language and written language based on the spontaneous speech extract. In my opinion, it is not easy to pinpoint those characteristics that occur only in spoken language, while some of them appear in different styles of writing such as newspaper articles, short stories, and personal letters.

Pedagogical implications

Recognizing the grammar of spoken English is crucial for language education. ESL instruction has historically emphasized written forms, neglecting the discourse realities of everyday communication. Teachers should integrate authentic spoken corpora into curricula to expose learners to ellipsis, hesitation markers, and turn-taking conventions (Chafe, 1982). Pedagogical materials can incorporate transcribed conversations to train students in recognizing contextually appropriate forms and developing listening comprehension. Additionally, learners should understand that spoken grammar is not incorrect but functionally adapted to interactional needs. Incorporating spontaneous speech awareness fosters communicative competence, pragmatic fluency, and sociolinguistic sensitivity (see also Chafe, 1982; Carter

McCarthy, 1995).

Overall, I think teachers, students, school administrators, and scholars have to pay attention to those differences that we have seen. Moreover, there must be a section for spontaneous speech in our curriculum and we have to teach our students not only grammar, writing, and speaking, but also the reality that they are going to encounter in real life conversation. Teachers must realize and understand that students differ in their motivation for learning English: some of them just want to communicate, others are keen to achieve native-like proficiency in speaking English; therefore, it is not reasonable to teach them the written language grammar. Moreover, they must be taught the characteristics of spontaneous speech. However, in my opinion, we have to admit that such differences do not present a grammar different to the one that has been used in written text, because those who use such speech are a group of people that may share the same ideas, culture, educational background, and age. On the other hand, educated people tend to speak in well-structured utterances similar to those found in written language. Although both styles of speech exist in spoken language, however, the former has not been given much attention in the teaching of English. It is time now to consider the differences between spoken language and written language and turn our view to spoken language, from negligence to awareness.

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Appendix

Two old school friends meet up in London to have lunch together. At the start of the extract they are looking at the menu and discussing what to have. A waitress comes up and stands silently waiting for them to order.

1	<S 01>	I'm gonna have er.... an Old Timer with cheese, I am
2	<S 02>	What's that?
3	<S 01>	The Old Timer burger but I'm gonna have cheese with it
4	<S 02>	Oh right, I'm gonna have, I think I'm gonna have a
5		veggy one with barbecue sauce on it.
6	<S 01>	Mm, are you gonna have a starter what you gonna have?
7	<S 02>	Yeah I'm trying not
8		to have nachos [5 secs]
9	<S 02>	I'm either gonna have nachos, buffalo wings or potato

skins

[11 secs]

<S 01> I'm gonna have the deep fried mushrooms, you like mushrooms, don't you?

[3 secs]

<S 02> I am gonna have to have nachos, I'm addicted to it I want, they don't do cider and I don't want a beer, [<S 03> Hi] don't do cider do you?

<S 03> Sorry

<S 02> Don't do cider

<S 03> No

<S 01> I'll have the deep fried mushrooms with erm, an Old Timer burger can I have cheese on it?

<S 03> What cheese?

<S 01> What's the difference?

<S 03> Swiss, Monterrey jack is an American cheese Enaudible] how would you like it cooked?

<S 01> Erm well done

<S 03> Yes

<S 02> Can I have the, er nachos and, erm, I was wondering whether to have a veggy burger or the normal burger erm, are the veggy burgers nice?

<S 03> Yeah they're okay, they're not made on the premises though

<S 02> All right I'll have, er I'll have a normal burger then, with barbecued beans

<S 03> How would you like it cooked?

<S 02> Erm medium

<S 03> And drinks

<S 02> Er d'you have, er have you got pineapple juice?

<S 03> [nods her head]

<S 02> Can I have pineapple juice mixed with white wine?

Mixed together

42	<S 03>	White wine
43	<S 02>	Yeah, in a big glass with loads of ice
44	<S 01>	[laughs] Erm, can I have, erm, mineral water sparkling one?
45	<S 03>	Okay
46	<S 01>	Thanks